Encyclopaedia Aristasiana

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The Way of the Sword

Aristasian fencing is unlike the Western Tellurian art which uses thin swords (the foil, the epée, and the confusingly-named sabre) based ultimately on the Renaissance rapier. Swords of this type have not developed in Aristasia, possibly because this type of sword was designed as a light weapon for civilian self-defence and no such weapon has ever been necessary in Aristasia.

There is a variety of swords in use in different parts of Aristasia, some are single-edged backswords like the Japanese katana, others are two-edged. Their use is traditionally restricted to those of Raihira Estate (mostly brunettes, but there have always been a few Raihira blonde swordmaidens). In the West some non-Raihirins of the raihiralan class practice the art, usually at Westrenne brunette schools of the raihiralan type such as Selastine.

Various Vikhelic arts are practiced by all military personnel and the sword is wielded by all Raihira officers in Novaria and the East and generally by raihiralan officers in the West (though some Westrenne regiments still restrict the sword to born Raihira). Most young Raihira brunettes and many Westrenne raihiralan practice fencing at school and very few Westrenne brunettes have never practised any Vikhelic art.

Parade Fencing

Parade fencing is an art used at military and school displays. Typically it uses elaborate flourishes and manouevres to demonstrate the student's expertise in the use of her weapon. Parade fencing can also be a combat sport in which points are awarded for style and the execution of advanced manoeuvres.

One should avoid the mistake, possible to Tellurians, of seeing parade fencing as something flashy or meretricious. It certainly does stress the "spectacular" side of the art, but its aim is to develop the sacred dance-like quality of the Way of the Sword, as well as to demonstrate the skill and ferocity of the Empire's defenders. It has its origins in rites performed to Sai Vikhe and still retains a strong ritual/religious

element, especially as one moves eastward.

See Also

Sai Vikhë

The Vikhelic Arts

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